



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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National Influenza Vaccination Week Highlights the Importance of Flu Vaccination
Department of Health Reminds Everyone It's Not Too Late To Get Vaccinated Against Influenza

BISMARCK, N.D. – January 10 through 16 is National Influenza Vaccination Week, and the North Dakota Department of Health is reminding all North Dakotans of the importance of receiving influenza vaccine, according to Molly Sander, Immunization Program manager.

“The flu can be a serious disease, and getting the flu vaccine is the easiest, safest and most effective way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu,” Sander said. “There is now plenty of H1N1 influenza vaccine available in the state, so we are urging everyone to get vaccinated to avoid influenza, regardless of age or health status.”

H1N1 vaccine is available for anyone who wants it, but is especially important for the following:

- Health-care workers
- Pregnant women
- People ages 6 months through 24 years
- People ages 25 through 64 with chronic medical conditions
- Parents and caregivers of infants younger than 6 months

As a reminder, children ages 6 months through 9 years need two doses of influenza vaccine one month apart in order to be fully protected against influenza.

“It is not too late to be vaccinated,” Sander said. “Cases of H1N1 influenza did peak this fall, but another wave of H1N1 or seasonal influenza could easily occur this winter or spring. That is why it is so important for people to be vaccinated now, to ensure that they will be protected if another wave of disease occurs.”

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According to Sander, H1N1 vaccine has been shown to be safe. The types of side effects that have been reported after H1N1 vaccination are mild, similar to what occurs after seasonal flu vaccination. Most commonly reported is soreness at the injection site. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates more than 60 million people already have been immunized, and no safety issues have yet turned up.

Doses of seasonal influenza vaccine are still limited in the state, so North Dakotans are urged to contact their local public health unit or health-care provider to find where vaccine is available. The Department of Health also has established a flu clinic locator at www.ndflu.com.

The North Dakota Department of Health has activated a toll-free public health hotline for people to call if they have questions about influenza. (The hotline cannot provide medical advice to callers. For that information, people should call their physicians.) The number to call is 1.866.207.2880. The hotline is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Standard Time. Information about influenza also is available on the Department of Health's influenza website at www.ndflu.com.

For more information, the media can contact Molly Sander, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4556.

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